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FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTION IN THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

Draft agreed conclusions submitted by the moderator of the Commission's panel on the critical area of concern: women and the environment

1. The recently held United Nations conferences and summits have underlined that unless women's contribution to environmental management is recognized and supported, sustainable development will be an elusive goal.

2. Governments, civil society and international agencies should join together to implement the strategies adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and other recent international conferences.

3. In the five-year review of Agenda 21, a major focus should be the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the implementation of all policies and programmes, taking into account the Beijing Platform for Action and the results of other global conferences.

4. The Commission for Sustainable Development should mainstream a gender perspective in its future work, ensuring that differential impacts on women and men of policies and programmes for sustainable development are well understood and effectively addressed.

5. In designing and implementing environmental programmes, including national and local-level Agenda 21 programmes, all responsible actors should ensure that a gender perspective is fully integrated, and that monitoring mechanisms are in place to assess gender mainstreaming and its impact.

6. All responsible actors are requested to approach sustainable development from a holistic and a gender perspective, and to develop a more coordinated and

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collaborative approach among United Nations agencies and bodies, as well as within and between government ministries and departments.

7. Women's participation in sustainable development at all levels, including financial and technical decision-making, should be supported, as required, by legislation and administrative instructions.

8. Research should be intensified on the impact of environmental pollutants and other harmful substances on women's health, including any link with the incidence of female cancers, and findings should be widely disseminated.

9. Governments and international organizations should strive to adopt a participatory approach to environmental protection and conservation at all levels, and in elaborating policies and programmes, should recognize that sustainable development is a shared responsibility of men and women, and should take into account both men's and women's productive and reproductive roles.

10. International agencies should continue to assist countries in developing the capacity to carry out gender impact assessments based on analytical tools and gender-sensitive guidelines developed for that purpose. Governments and the private sector should accelerate efforts to carry out gender impact assessments of investment decisions.

11. International organizations and Governments are encouraged to ensure that funding for environmental/sustainable development programmes which is targeted to include and benefit women should be shared across sectors and should not derive strictly from funds earmarked for women's programmes, while bearing in mind the importance of continuing women-targeted programming.

12. Multilateral and bilateral donors should increase support for women's organizations to play an active role in advocacy for sustainable development and in the implementation of policies and programmes for sustainable development.

13. Governments and non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, should provide information on sound environmental practices, and should support education and training for young people on sustainable development and women's human rights.

14. Political parties should incorporate environmental goals with a gender dimension into their party platforms.

15. Governments and the private sector should strive to reduce poverty and create sound, well-functioning local economies as the basis for sustainable development, inter alia, by empowering the local population, especially women.

16. The knowledge and expertise of women, especially of rural women, in the use and the preservation of natural resources should be recognized, protected and fully used in the design and implementation of programmes for the management of the environment.

17. Governments at various levels should continue to take the necessary steps to ensure the empowerment of women through acceleration of women's equal access to and control over natural resources, land and other forms of property, credit, information and new technologies, as an important component of gender mainstreaming for sustainable development. Changes should also be promoted in traditional and customary practices that discriminate against women.

18. Women's role in developing technologies, such as solar energy, and in influencing the development of new technologies should be supported by Governments, research institutions and the private sector, and access to education and training in science and technology should be given high priority.

19. Governments and the international community are called on to give priority attention to the links between security and the environment and to take urgent steps to destroy landmines and ban the use of environmentally damaging weapons of war.